Deaths due to pollution in Metropolis

179. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any estimate about the number of deaths caused by air pollutants in different metropolitan cities has been made;

(b) if so, the number of air pollution—related deaths in Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai in 1997, 1998 and 1999; and

(c) the steps taken to curb and control the pollution—related deaths and diseases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The World Bank has estimated that about 40,000 premature deaths in 36 Indian cities have occurred in 1995 due to air pollution. However, there is no conclusive data available to confirm these figures. No mortality data attributable to air pollution is available for Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to curb and control air pollution include the following:

(i) The Government has formulated a Comprehensive Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution, which lays stress on prevention and control aspects of pollution.

(ii) The ambient air quality of various cities and towns is monitored regularly through a network of 290 monitoring stations under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme.

(iii) Ambient air quality standards and emission standards for industrial units have been notified.

(iv) Emissions from highly polluting industrial units and thermal power plants are regularly monitored and action is taken against the defaulting units.

(v) Environment action plans for reducing pollution in Delhi and

Mumbai have been prepared by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, which are under implementation.

(vi) Low lead petrol had been introduced in the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai with effect from June 1994. Subsequently unleaded petrol for catalytic converter fitted vehicle was introduced in the above mentioned cities with effect from 1.4.1995. Unleaded petrol is now being supplied to the entire country with effect from 1.2.2000. Sulphur is being progressively reduced in diesel. Fuel quality standards for petrol and diesel have been notified.

(vii) Gross emission standards for on-road vehicles and mass emission standards for all categories of new vehicles have been notified under the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.

(viii) Fiscal incentives are provided for installation of pollution control equipment.

Pollution in Delhi

180. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that according to the statistics of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) one person is killed per hour due to particulate pollution in Delhi;

(b) whether it is a fact that respirable particles kill even at low concentration and their levels in Delhi are as high as eight times of the normal standard;

(c) if so, what preventive measures Government have taken so far in this regard; and

(d) whether Government favour use of CNG as an alternative to diesel by DTC fleet of buses, as recommended by CSE?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL